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CENTRAL FAX CENTER

JAN 3 1 2005

In the Specification:

Please insert the following paragraph on page 1, at the beginning of the specification:

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is related to co-pending Continuation-in-Part U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/185,150, filed June 28, 2002, entitled, "SYSTEM AND METHODS FOR INFERRING INFORMATIONAL GOALS AND PREFERRED LEVEL OF DETAIL OF RESULTS IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS POSED TO AN AUTOMATED INFORMATION-RETRIEVAL OR QUESTION-ANSWERING SERVICE", and co-pending divisional U.S. Patent Application Serial No. _____ (Atty. Docket No. MS164185.03/MSFTP215USB), filed on _____, 2005, entitled, "SYSTEM AND METHODS FOR INFERRING INFORMATIONAL GOALS AND PREFERRED LEVEL OF DETAIL OF ANSWERS."

Please replace the paragraph at page 9, line 11 with the following amended paragraph:

The results of analyzing such high-level informational goals (e.g., inferring age of user) can thus be employed to facilitate more intelligently and thus more precisely and/or accurately retrieving information via, for example, guided search and retrieval, post-search filtering and/or composition of new text from one or more other text sources. By way of illustration, and not limitation, if the age of a user is inferred as being between under thirteen, then a first set of resources may be searched and/or a first post-search filter may be employed. For example, an encyclopedia designed for children may be searched and an eight letter post-search word size filter may be employed. By way of further illustration, if the age of a user is inferred as being between thirty and forty, then a second set of resources (e.g., regular adult encyclopedia) may be searched and a second post-search filter (e.g., word sizes up to fourteen letters) may be employed.

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Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 30 with the following amended paragraph:

In one example of the present invention, the learning system 150 and/or the inference engine 112 can further be adapted to control and/or guide a dialog that can be employed to clarify information associated with informational goals, desired level of detail, age and so on. By way of illustration and not limitation, the learning system 150 may make an inference (e.g., age), but then may present a user interface dialog that facilitates clarifying the age of the user. Thus, the learning system 150 may be adapted, *in-situ*, to acquire more accurate information concerning inferences, with resulting increases in accuracy. Such increased accuracy may be important, for example, in complying with Federal Regulations (e.g., Children's Online Privacy Protection Act). By way of further illustration, the inference engine 112 may make an inference (e.g., level of detail in answer), but then may present a user interface that facilitates clarifying the desired level of detail in an answer. Thus, the inference engine 112 may adapt processes employed in generating an inference, and may further adapt search and retrieval processes and/or post-search filtering processes to provide a closer fit between returned information and desired coverage.

Please replace the paragraph at page 15, line 11 with the following amended paragraph:

Based, at least in part, on information retrieved from the inference model 240, the inference engine 212 will determine which, if any, informational goals can be inferred from a query. If one or more informational goals can be inferred, then the inference engine 212 may perform informational goal selection to determine, which, if any, informational goals should be employed by the answerresponse generator 214 to produce a response to the query. By way of illustration, if conflicting informational goals are inferred from the query, then the inference engine 212 may direct the answerresponse generator 214 to produce sample queries that can be employed in subsequent query by example processing by an information consumer. By way of further illustration, if the inference engine 212 determines that a specific informational goal can be inferred from the query, then the inference engine 212 may direct the answerresponse generator 214 to retrieve a certain type and/or volume of information that will be responsive to the query and its embedded informational goals. Thus, by employing the parse data generated by the natural language processor 216 and the information stored in the inference model 240, the

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information gathering experience of an information consumer employing the run time system 200 is enhanced as compared to conventional document retrieval systems.

Please replace the paragraph at page 21, line 4 with the following amended paragraph:

The system 600 can provide linguistic data from the linguistic data data store 650 to the supervised learning system 660. Since statistical learning to build decision trees is employed in the present invention, the supervised learning system 660 may either establish a decision model 670 (e.g., a decision tree) and/or update a decision model 670. The decision model 670 can store information concerning the likelihood that certain informational goals are associated with a question, with the conditional probabilities being computed by the statistical analyzer 662. A process and/or human associated with the supervised learning system 660 may examine a question, examine the inferences and/or probabilities associated with the question in the decision model 670 and determine that manipulations to the inferences and/or probabilities are required. Further, the process and/or human associated with the supervised learning system 660 may examine a question and the inferences and/or probabilities associated with the question in the decision model 670 and determine that one or more parameters associated with the statistical analyzer 662 and/or automated processes associated with the supervised learning system 660 require manipulation. In this manner, different decision models 670 may be produced with biases towards inferring certain informational goals, which facilitates localizing such decision models 670. Such localization can provide improvements over conventional systems.

Please replace the paragraph at page 24, line 17 with the following amended paragraph:

The tagging tool 850 also includes buttons that can be employed to process the query on a higher level than the field-by-field description provided above. For example, the tagging tool 850 includes a wrong parse button 890 that can be employed to indicate that the parse of the query was incorrect. Similarly, the tagging tool 850 includes a bad query button 895 that can be employed to selectively discard a query, so that the analysis of the query is not reflected in an inference model. However, bad queries may optionally be includesincluded while non-queries are discarded, for example.